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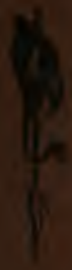

The Morality Motive In Contemporary English Drama

BY

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[A thesis presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the University of Pennsylvania in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.]

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PREFACE

This study, it is hoped, is a slight contribution to the field of modern drama. It attempts to take an account of one phase of the English religious drama of the last ten years, that of the Modern Morality. But it is obvious that it would be both useless and unwise to give individual consideration to all the plays written and produced during that time; consequently, I have tried to select those which seem to me the most significant, and, at the same time, the most representative of the species. Strictly speaking, 'The Piper' is not a morality; its *dramatis personae* are not abstractions, and it is not allegorical. But the symbolism is so pervasive and compelling, and the moral so patent that it has seemed proper to include it.

I wish to express my gratitude to all who have aided me in this study. Especially am I under obligations to Mrs. Spencer Trask, and to Mr. Milton Royle, for generously lending me the manuscripts of their plays, 'The Little Town of Bethlehem,' and 'The Struggle Everlasting,' respectively. My thanks are due also to Professor C. M. Gayley of the University of California, to Mr. Frank Lea Short of the American Dramatic Guild, to Mr. Franklin

Sargent of the American Academy of Dramatic Arts, to Miss Anna Wynne, to Sir F. R. Benson, to Mr. Laurence Housman, to Miss A. M. Buckton, and to Dr. Douglas Hyde, for their kindness in answering inquiries directed to them; to Canon Brooke of the Church of St. John the Divine, for a copy of 'The Bethlehem Tableaux'; to Mr. Nugent Monck, for much of the data contained in Appendix B; to Mr. William Poel, for the loan of his private copy of 'The Temptation of Agnes,' and for hearty encouragement; to Professor C. G. Child of the University of Pennsylvania, for several valuable suggestions; and especially to Professors Felix E. Schelling and Cornelius Weygandt of the same University, for much critical help.

JOSEPH WAYNE BARLEY.

Mexico, Missouri.
September, 1911.

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INTRODUCTION

Within the last decade there has been a noteworthy infusion of the religious element in our English drama. This has manifested itself in two ways: in the production of plays based on bible narrative or incident, and in those in which the "Morality" motive of the old religious drama, adapted of course to modern conditions, has been used. It is with the latter that this study is concerned, though in the nature of the subject, a line separating sharply the two species cannot always be drawn. For example, the Nativity plays which we shall consider are based on bible narrative, but at the same time fall within our purview since their aim is ultimately not the mere dramatic portrayal of bible story and incident, as such, but the inculcation of ethical and spiritual truths as guides to life and conduct.

The causes of this return to the religious drama are not easily determined and can at best be only surmised. Some possible influences, however, may be set down. The problem play with its intense and often coarse realism had ceased to attract; during the last decade of the previous century and even before, there had been a conscious and determined effort to reclaim the drama from

the bad condition into which it had fallen, and an additional effort on the part of some, especially of Mr. Henry Arthur Jones who more than once had fallen within the grasp of the dragon of English drama, the Censor, to define the relation between religion and the stage, and to show the virtuous denizens of "Peckham-cum-Camberwell" that biblical themes were as much the province of the dramatist as of the poet, painter, and musician; [1] the echo of Oberammergau had grown more distinct; the Bethlehem Tableaux had been given first in 1898 in Kensington, South London; Hauptman's 'Hannele,' a genuine miracle play, had found its way into English; Rostand's 'La Samarataine,' had been given in Paris as early as 1897; much of the poetry of Robert Buchanan was an inquiry into the heart of religion itself; William Sharp had written such stories as 'The Wayfarer,' 'The Distant Country,' 'Three Legends of the Christ Child', and others; Mrs. Hinkson had rendered the nativity events into six miracle plays, 'Our Lord's Coming and Childhood;' the writing of mystery plays for the Irish Literary Theatre had been considered; [2] the

1. 'The Renascence of the English Drama,' p. 119.

2. Mr. W. B. Yeats in a letter to "Fiona Macleod"

Maeterlinckian *genre* with its emphasis on the dramatic significance of the mystery within and around us, the importance of intuitive insight into phenomena of the soul, and the consideration of the soul face to face with its own mystery and with the mystery of eternity, had become so well known in England as to lead some to think that it has been of transcendent importance in shaping the way for the dramatic re-expression of the religious element; [3] while, finally, the most important of all and an influence accounting largely for all the above-mentioned points, the spiritual awakening, of which the religious play is only one manifestation, the gospel of the twentieth century in contrast with, possibly as a complement to, the utilitarian and materialistic thought of its predecessor.

Be the value of these causes what it may, the fact remains that the morality motive,

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advocating plays for an Irish Theatre:

"The plays might be almost, in some cases, modern mystery plays. Your 'Last Supper,' for instance would make such a play." 'William Sharp; A Memoir' pp. 280-2.

It was afterwards decided that plays dealing with Irish subjects only would be presented by the Irish Literary Theatre.

3. M. Maeterlinck's continued interest in this sort of drama has been recently evinced in his latest play, 'Mary Magdalene.'

broadly speaking, had lain dormant in English drama for the last three centuries. Beginning with the revival of 'Everyman,' however, interest in this dramatic species has been continuous and has manifested itself in the writing of plays more or less in the manner of the old moralities, but with the motive in each case unmistakable; in mystery plays centering for the most part around the nativity events, and in revivals of morality and miracle plays of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

Inasmuch as several of the plays to be considered show the influence of 'Everyman,' it will be well to give some account of its revival and to re-tell the story. The play was revived July 13, 1901. Mr. William Poel, founder of the Elizabethan Stage Society, to whom much credit is due for revealing again some of the less familiar masterpieces of the sixteenth and seventeenth century drama, wishing to show the members of his society a morality play, essayed the experiment. It was in every sense of the word an experiment, for the text gave him no clue as to how the play should be acted, and the subject was one which required great tact and skill on the part of the presenter. The success, however, was immediate and marked. The performance was repeated in various out-

lying places, the play was later taken to the regular stage in London where it ran for weeks becoming almost a sensation, became the accepted Lenten offering, found its way through the provinces, lent itself to musical setting, [1] came to America and was performed not only at many of the Universities and in large cities but in many of the smaller as well. Wherever it was adequately given, it bore a deep appeal and made a lasting impression.

The play opens with a prologue in which the theme and the main outlines are given. The voice of God is then heard complaining of the ingratitude of mankind for whom He had suffered and died, and sorrowing because men in their pursuit of wealth and pleasure had neglected to worship Him. They had divorced themselves from His laws, had made the seven deadly sins commendable instead of heinous, and had followed their own desires, forgetful of the fact that life is uncertain and liable to end at any moment. He must, therefore, call them to a sense of their personal responsibility, demand an account of their lives and deeds, and mete out justice to them.

Death is sent to serve this summons. He meets the world in the person of Everyman, a

1. By H. Walford Davies (1904).

gay dapper youth, who with a lute slung from his shoulder and a merry song upon his lips is entirely oblivious to the responsibilities of life and is bent upon the pleasures the world has to give. At first Everyman regards the Lord's summons in a careless manner, for he does not recognize the messenger as Death. But when the news comes to him in no uncertain tones that he must die, the terrible facts of a misspent life and of his individual responsibility to his Maker for the life merely lent, not given, to him strike his soul with overwhelming terror. Death has come when least looked for, and Everyman is totally unprepared. Characteristically, he tries the ways of the world by offering Death a bribe; and when this does not avail, he pleads for a respite in which to prepare his reckoning.

> "To Thynke on the it maketh my herte seke
> For all unredy is my boke of rekenynge."

But Death is inexorable, and Everyman finds that there is no way of escape. Here is one of the forceful moments in the drama. As one watches or reads the play one's soul trembles to see the terrible figure of death slowly but surely gaining the victory, calmly but remorselessly pursuing his prey which seeks in vain to escape. And whatever may be one's

creed or belief, the sense of personal responsibility is intuitional, and this the drama of 'Everyman' enforces with compelling truth.

But if Everyman may not have a respite, he may have company on his journey if any can be found hardy enough to go with him. Here at least is a ray of light in the darkness which has so suddenly surrounded him. He turns to Fellowship who has been his boon companion and in whom he has had all his "affyaunce." Fellowship, as is his wont, is ready to do anything for him; he will relieve his distress, get revenge if he has been wronged, go to hell with him if need be, "haunt to women," even commit murder for him. Comforted by these promises, Everyman opens his heart and tells of the journey he has to take. But when Fellowship becomes aware of the full significance of the journey, he recedes from his boastful promises and refuses absolutely to go.

> "If Dethe were the messenger
> For no man that is lyvynge today
> I wyll not go that lothe journaye
> Not for the fader that bygate me."

Forsaken by Fellowship, Everyman with Teuton instinct turns to his Kindred. Surely his own blood will help him, for

> "Kynde wyll crepe, where it may not go,"

but they, too, refuse to accompany him.

He is sure, however, that there is one friend, Riches, who will go with him. Has Everyman not spent his entire life in the service of this friend? And has not this friend become of ample proportions to help him in any difficulty? He, therefore, turns to him with confidence. But to his dismay, Riches not only refuses him aid, but laughs at him and rejoices in his troubles. Too late, Everyman learns the truth that wealth not only cannot help him in the life to come, but may be a curse to him in this present life.

"For, and I wente with the,
Thou sholdes fare moche the worse for me;
For because on me thou dyd set thy mynde,
Thy rekenynge I have made blotted and blynde."

This picture of desertion, the inevitable refusal and impotence of all worldly things to deliver man from his doom is one that can never lose its terror and one that forshadows the tragedy awaiting the life which has neglected God.

With the refusal of all his friends to aid him and with the world fast slipping from under his feet, Everyman is on the edge of despair. Finally, he thinks of a friend toward whom he has been lukewarm and whom he has

shamefully neglected. He calls Good Deeds. Here is a scene of the deepest pathos and one which shows that the old author of 'Everyman' had a true dramatic instinct. Good Deeds in the person of a maiden lies prostrate, bound down with the sins of Everyman and with his book of reckoning under her feet. Everyman looks at the book, but not a letter can he see. He pleads with her to assist him; but though willing, she is so weak that she cannot rise. She can counsel him, however, and advises that he go to her sister, Knowledge. At last he has found a friend, for Knowledge says to him:

"Everyman, I wyll go with the and be thy gyde,
In thy moost nede to go by thy syde."

He puts himself under her guidance; she leads him to Confession, "that clensynge ryvere;" Confession gives him the scourge of Penance typical of the old thought that he who punishes himself needs no punishment from God; he changes his gay garments for those of deep contrition and humbles himself before his Maker. His soul repentant and his proud nature abased, Good Deeds becomes strong and able to help him.

"Ye have me made hole and sounde
Therefore I wyll byde by the in every stounde."

Everyman is now prepared to die. And who was not moved to tears at the sight of the solemn procession which conducted him to his grave! And who was not profoundly impressed by the utter powerlessness of all earthly things and of all human faculties to aid him! One by one they deserted him, Knowledge, Discretion, Beauty, Five Wits,—all but Good Deeds, who accompanies him to help him make his record clear in that world to which he is going. And as his soul passes away, the song of angels welcomes him to the fold of the saved.

The religious impression which this old morality play made when it was revived is attested by all who have seen it. Death, we know, is a constant companion, but in our strife with the world and in our carelessness we are prone to overlook his presence. But the realistic picture that this play presents to us of the grim figure stalking upon the heels of the youth and clutching him in his cold embrace is calculated to make us regard our own condition, and to realize the necessity of looking to our own "boke of rekenynge." The vividness of life—the reality of death—these are the striking contrasts which this drama indelibly impresses upon our minds.

The play is medieval in tone, yet its motive is essentially modern. It lays the emphasis on life and conduct. It makes us realize our own personal responsibility. It demonstrates to us that not the righteousness of another alone, but the careful ordering of our own lives is the basis of our redemption. The words of the epilogue strike a chord which vibrates through the minds of us all:

"And remember Beaute, Fyve Wyttes, Strengthe and Dyscrecyon
They all at the last do Everyman forsake
Save his Good Deedes."

This accord with the religious view of our own day goes far toward explaining the hearty acceptance which this play enjoyed and the subsequent influence it has wielded.

Furthermore, 'Everyman' demonstrates how much loftier was the aim of the drama in times so far remote in the past that no author emerges to father it. It showed the drama of our own day how far it had departed from its original purpose, and pointed out its higher latent possibilities. The quaint story, the excellence of the characterization, the novelty of the stage setting, the beauty of the language, the humor and pathos, the excellence and naivete of the dramatic construction, the fine blending of drama and allegory,

the depth of religious feeling, all combined to make a moral effect upon sophisticated modern spectators little short of that it made upon those for whom it was immediately written,—a splendid testimony of the dramatic genius of its unknown author,—and to produce an unmistakable and beneficent influence on contemporary English drama.

Playwrights who have written the dramas considered in the following pages may not be willing to agree with me, but I think that 'Everyman' has been very largely the source of their inspiration and the immediate occasion of the symbolic and spiritual aspects to be found in their plays. That there has been during the last few years a marked tendency toward the spiritualizing and intellectualizing of drama cannot be denied. To this tendency 'Everyman' has in no small measure contributed. The re-presentation of this old play had shown dramatists and the public that spiritual matters were not necessarily divorced from stage presentation, that religious drama when reverently and artistically produced was productive of great good, that the theater might be made an elevating and educational force, and that men and women in modern times as well as in

medieval could still watch a drama of undoubted religious motive and content and be taught thereby. Why not take the motives of these old dramas and apply them to modern conditions? Why was it not possible to give plays a spiritual aspect, and read to men some lessons in phases of life hitherto not only neglected by the stage but by men themselves? Here, then, was a field that had lain fallow for centuries, and here was an opportunity and a method to inculcate religious thought, and incidentally, or with avowed purpose, to attack some of the shortcomings of modern life.

THE MORALITY GROUP

Before entering upon a consideration of the Morality Group, it may be well to attempt a definition of the term, "Modern Morality." One type of the old religious drama of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was the "Moral" play, or, as it came to be called, the "Morality." The distinguishing mark of this type is its presentation of conduct in life in the guise of allegory and under figure of abstract virtues and vices. Its picture of the world is indirect and symbolic; its purpose was ethical instruction in the abstract and exhortation to right living.[1] The modern morality is this also, but with a difference; it is this adapted to modern thought and modern conditions. The mind of the modern man is not given to thinking in abstractions or to translating the abstract into the concrete. The characters in a play must themselves be concrete, and the subject matter must be presented in a concrete manner. The allegory may remain, but it must be kept unobtrusive; while ethical instruction in right living remains as in the old drama the dominant purpose. The main difference, then, between the new and old is largely one of method of pre-

1. 'Elizabethan Drama,' Schelling, p. 52.

sentation. The aim remains the same.

'The Hour-Glass' by William Butler Yeats is a morality avowedly written under the influence of 'Everyman.' A Wise Man is attempting to explain a passage written by a beggar on the walls of Babylon. "There are two living countries, the one visible and the one invisible; and when it is Winter with us, it is Summer in that country; and when the November winds are up among us, it is lambing time there." His pupils have asked him for an explanation, but he can make nothing of it. While the Wise Man is meditating over the passage, the Fool approaches. Asked what he knows about wisdom, he tells of the effects he has seen of it. For at Kilcluan where the bells used to ring regularly at day break the people snore now; at Tubbervannach where the young men formerly climbed the hill to the blessed well, they now sit at the cross-roads playing cards; and Carrigoras where the friars were formerly religious and charitable is now the scene of drinking and revelry. All this, says the Fool, has been brought about by the teaching of the Wise Man. Asked why he carries shears in his hand, the Fool replies that with them he cuts the nets with which men try to catch the feet

of the angels. The Wise Man, however, does not believe in angels; but the Fool tells him they are all about one like blades of grass though they can be seen only when one is quiet. It is then that something wakes within one, "then all in a minute tall people go by, happy and laughing."

As the Fool believes, so believed the entire country before the Wise Man had disseminated his teachings. But he had overthrown belief in such foolish things. He had disallusioned the people of their old simple faith in a "heaven where birds sang the hours and about angels that came and stood on men's thresholds." But at this moment an angel appeared on the threshold of his own door and announced to him that when the last grains of sand had fallen in the hour-glass he must die; because, since his coming into that country, no souls had passed over the threshold of heaven, the threshold itself had become grassy, the gates rusty, and the watching angels lonely. To him heaven's door would not open, the gates of purgatory would remain closed, and he must abide in hell. Face to face with his doom he falls on his knees, begging forgiveness. He pleads the ease with which doubt comes in a world where things decay and where hopes are often blasted. He pleads for

time—for a year, a day, an hour, in which to undo the great wrongs he has committed. Though it is impossible to do this, the Angel tells him that if within the hour he can find one that believes—"for from one fiery seed, watched over by those that sent me, the harvest can come again to heap the golden threshing-floor"—he may finally reach heaven. He calls his pupils, but there is not one that has not been thoroughly imbued with his teaching. He summons his wife who used to believe in God, but she, too, under his instructions, has left off such superstitions. As a last resource he appeals to the Fool. The Fool has never lost the old simple faith and the Wise Man dies saved.

The morality motive in this play of Mr. Yeats admits of a three-fold application. In the first place, it is a broad protest against the materialistic philosophy which teaches that one shall believe only those things palpable to the senses. The Wise Man had taught his children to believe only what they could see. He had rooted out the simple faith of the people in God, and had taught them to apply the test of reason in deciding what they should believe. Furthermore, it demonstrates the utter futility of trying to explain away the existence

of God, and of Heaven and Hell by reason and argument, and shows that religious truth can be comprehended only through intuitive insight. "One sinks in on God; we do not see the truth; God sees the truth in us," says the Wise Man at the end of the play. In this belief Mr. Yeats allies himself to M. Maeterlinck and the Mystics, all of whom hold reason in contempt. And this goes far toward explaining his conception of the Fool's wisdom, for one of the elements of the mystic philosophy is that fools have "glimmerings of a wisdom beyond the wisdom of the wise.[1] The Wise Man had destroyed the people's belief in the Three Worlds, but the Fool still retained his faith in them. It was he who saw the soul of the Wise Man—"a little winged thing—a little shining thing" in the hand of the angel, and he knew that the angel's hand would open in Paradise. Finally, and in this we see the propagandist side, it is like the same author's 'Where There is Nothing,' a plea for faith in a spiritual life—not confined to a single church—today one of the ruling passions of the Irish people.[2]

1. Krans—'William Butler Yeats and the Irish Literary Revival,' p. 171.

2. Ibid., p. 134.

Mr. Arthur Symons' 'The Fool of the World' is a morality in which Death is represented as a Fool, masked, wearing a cap of bells, and bearing a staff of bells. The scene described by the author is a dark wood in which a man dressed as a Pilgrim is standing. He has had a wearisome journey through life, and as he comes within the Sanctuary of Death the great problem of what lies beyond confronts him. At first, he thinks that Death being altogether wise is a friend, who will lift the veil of darkness and fear and solve his problem for him. But then he reasons that this life being evil must end in evil, that man lives only the limit that Death gives, and Death, therefore, cannot be a friend. But surely if Death is not a friend, she is wisdom and knows the secrets of eternity. In his despair he prays to her. She comes to him, not in the garb of wisdom, however, but in that of a fool. She tells him she goes up and down the earth shaking her bells and humanity follows, dancing to her music, but that none return to tell whither she has led them. The Pilgrim then requests that there be taken from him the dread of the three makers of his bed, the Spade, the Coffin, and the Worm. These are

summoned by Death to speak against the Man's fears. The Spade will build him a house whose foundations shall go down in the stony soil of sleep, and whose floors shall be noiseless; the Coffin will give him a dreamless sleep from which he may awake with untroubled eyes; and the Worm assures him of a reception equal to that of a King. The man is still dissatisfied, for his problem is yet unsolved. Death then calls in three of her present guests, Youth, Middle Age, and Old Age, to attest her mercy. But Youth comes unwillingly, for he is not yet ready to leave the pleasures of life; Middle Age has begun to grow a trifle weary of the fret of the world, and answers the call of the bells with neither a sorry nor a glad heart; but Old Age, tottering on his pilgrimage over the hard road of life, welcomes the friendly arm of death and praises her mercy in relieving him of his burdens. To the querulous mind of the Pilgrim, however, these voices are the voices of mortals, and he is inquiring after immortality. He again implores Death to "Speak the whole truth of Death," but she replies:

> "Shall the seven bells of folly know
> Pity, that lead me where I go?
> Have pity; all ye that draw breath,
> O men, have pity upon Death.

> The bells that weigh about my brows
> And ring all flesh into my house,
> Are a fool's witless bells:
> I lead
> The dance of fools, a fool indeed;
> And my hands gather where I find,
> For I am death and I am blind."

The morality method of presentation "under figure of abstraction" is obvious. The motive is equally so, but the manner of its enforcement is noteworthy. The question which the Pilgrim asks at the beginning of the play, What of the life after death? seems to approach nearer and nearer to its answer, but does not reach it until the very close of the play, when, in a powerful dramatic climax, there comes the disappointing and pitiless reply that there is and can be no answer. It is a careful bit of artistry, and though studied, as is everything Mr. Symons has done, is, nevertheless, effective. The play is surcharged with passion and beauty of language, and must have produced a strong effect with its "decoratively sepulchral naivete."[1]

To Mr. Nugent Monck more than to any other one man is due the revived interest in the old religious drama for its own sake.

1. 'Athenaeum,' Mar. 9. 1907.

Through the medium of the English Drama Society of which he was the founder and moving spirit, there have been re-presented many of the old religious plays, both miracles and moralities. We refer the reader to the list of these given elsewhere,[2] and shall direct our attention now to an original work of the morality type by Mr. Monck, 'Life's Measure.'

To a Young Man eager to attain fame in the world there has appeared a vision of Labour, who tells him that by incessant toil only can he reach the desired goal. To labor then the young man dedicates himself to the extent that he shuts himself away from all the outward joys of life and purges his heart of all sentiment. In his inordinate desire to work either for the sake of work itself or for the ultimate hope of reward, he regards the demand made upon him to serve his fellowmen an intrusion. He has entirely lost sight of the fact that he owes his fellowmen and the world his service and that labor performed with any other motive is vain. When Motherhood appeals to him to leaven the work of his brain and hands with heart and soul, he replies that the "service of the soul," religion, has become useless in life. The Fool, who

2. See Appendix B.

represents the need of the world for laughter, and the Poet, who represents the beauty of the world and of life, plead with him to mingle the service of self with that of his fellowman. But he is obdurate and returns to the task of seeking truth, unconvinced that its attainment depends upon unselfishness.

As he grows older, however, he realizes the incompleteness and the loneliness of his life. It is then that Love comes to him in the garb of a Pilgrim. But after a short stay the disguise slips off, and as Love stands before him the man is overwhelmed with the poverty of his own existence. The vision of the loveliness of woman rises before him. Led by Love, he leaves his labor to seek the counterpart of the vision in real life.

The author then depicts the woman. In her way she is as selfish as the man. She serves Beauty for beauty's sake without reference to her obligations to the world. The glamour and show of life have greater attractions for her than the solid realities. The scroll and the illumination which she has wrought around the pages of her missal have more of her attention as she reads than the moral sentiments they decorate. Consequently she can see nothing to admire in the prosaic life of the Man. She

refuses his proffered love, and bestows her affections upon the gay, artistic Minstrel who to her is the

".....proper man,
For he can please the eye and charm the ear."

With his love unrequited and himself bereft of hope, the man returns to the scene of his labor. But he has learned a great lesson. His soul has been purified, the well of truth in his heart has been deepened, and he no longer measures earth by rule of thumb. His own Mother has died, and he has learned "service of the soul." Labour appears to him and tells him that only through incessant toil can he fill the void in his life. But he works now with heart and soul as well as with brain and hand, and with the hope that the woman to whom he has irrevocably given his love will understand, and that the world will recognize that what he does is to honor her.

However, he is interrupted in his toil. Death appears and announces that his work must cease. He pleads for longer space, that by labor he may prepare himself by yielding some fruit of life. But Death is inexorable. With the prayer on his lips that he may be judged not by what he has been but by what he has

tried to be, he dies. And then when it is too late, the Woman, awakened to a sense of her own mistake, comes to offer herself to the Man. Her soul, too, has been purified, and she lives her life with the memory of the man forever enshrined in her heart.

'Life's Measure' fulfills all the requirements of the genuine morality, and, except for the language and the interspersed lyrics, it could have come as well from the age when that species of drama was in the heyday of its productivity. The characters are abstractions: Man, Motherhood, the Fool, the Poet, Woman, Vanity, Modesty, The Minstrel, Love, Labour, Death. There is the typical contest for mastery of the soul by the good and bad personified qualities. The entire treatment is allegorical, and the play, taken as a whole, is a commentary upon and a guide to conduct and life. While owing something to 'Everyman' as we shall show below, it is at the same time original in conception, and deserves to be better known for its even if not high literary merit, for its strong character analysis, and for its considerable imaginative grasp.

We have grouped these three plays, 'The Hour-Glass,' 'The Fool of the World' and 'Life's Measure' together because all of them

show that their inspiration came directly from 'Everyman.' In each, as in their common prototype, the character of Death appears. In 'Everyman' he is represented in accordance with medieval imagination in all his grim terror and foreboding omnipotence. In the 'Hour-Glass' he comes in the form of an angel; yet our sympathy for the victim is less enlisted than it is for Everyman, because the Wise Man of the 'Hour-Glass' incriminated himself by voluntary transgression, while Everyman's sins were those of neglect and omission. In 'Life's Measure' the horror is yet more lessened by the angel demonstrating to the man that Death, instead of being an enemy to mankind, is a friend. In both plays, as in 'Everyman,' are the summoning of a soul, and an analogous inexorable character of Death. In the 'Fool of the World' we have Death presented as a Fool, but one claiming little kinship with the similar character of medieval times. The very weakness of the character is perhaps shown in her femininity. The motive here is not so much that of summoning a man to an account, or of showing the omnipresence of death in human life, as of the inability of man and of Death herself to fathom the mystery of the unseen world to

which Death is constantly leading humanity of all ages and degrees.

That the literary renaissance in Ireland should produce plays of a religious character, which reincarnate bits of legendary lore of saint and miracle with which the religious emotions of the Irish are so inextricably intertwined, is to be expected.[1] The religious faith of the Irish is for the most part simple and naive, but blended with these qualities is an element of the mystical, indications of which we have already seen in Mr. Yeats' 'Hour-Glass.' Plays exhibiting the former characteristics are Lady Gregory's 'The Travelling Man,' and Dr. Douglas Hyde's 'The Lost Saint,' two dramatized legends from the distant past of Ireland's inexhaustible treasury of folk-lore and tradition.

In 'The Travelling Man,' a play instinct with emotions that lie close to the Irish soil, the Savior himself appears in the guise of a wayfarer. The one scene is laid in the home of a peasant, and there are only three characters,

1. In addition to the religious plays of Mr. Yeats, Lady Gregory, and Dr. Hyde, Mr. Norreys Connell has written and produced 'Time,' a morality play, and Mr. Padraic Colm is the author of 'A Miracle of The Corn.'

a Wayfarer, a Woman, and a Child. It is Samhain night, an occasion which the Woman always commemorates, because just seven years before when cast out of the house where she had been a serving girl, she had trod the highways seeking shelter, until overcome with exhaustion she had sunk down by the roadside. A stranger approached, "a very tall man, bright and shining in the darkness," and led her to the home she now occupies. Now this night she is preparing a great cake, for the stranger had told her that he would come again, and she thinks it will be on a Samhain evening. She runs out to a neighbor's, leaving the child in the house. While she is away, a ragged, mud-stained, barefooted man carrying a small branch bearing both fruit and flowers comes to the house and plays with the child at building the beautiful garden in the Golden Mountain from which the man has come. When the Woman returns, she is very angry that a tramp should come into her house and play with her boy. She refuses him shelter or food, and orders him away. He goes out into the night, leaving his branch behind. The boy runs after him, but sees him crossing the river walking on the water, and a light is before his feet. The woman, realizing that she has turned away

the man whom she has so long expected, takes the branch and cries, "There are fruit and flowers on it. It is a branch that is not of any earthly tree. He is gone, he is gone, and I never knew him! He was that stranger that gave me all! He is the King of the World!"

'The Lost Saint' by Dr. Hyde centers around an old holy man by name Aongus, known throughout Ireland for his great humility. Unwilling that people should give him such great honor as to call him Saint or poet, he stole away one night and went through the country disguised, working for his living.

In a school some boys were trying to learn a poem written by this lost Saint, and all succeeded but one, who was very stupid. This boy was made to remain in the school while his companions and the teacher went out to play. The janitor, an old gray-headed man, came into the room and offered to help the boy, saying that he knew the poem himself. But the boy fell asleep at his task, and the old man prayed for him. When his companions returned, the boy awoke, and to the amazement of all was able to repeat the whole poem. It was discovered through the interpretation

of a dream which the boy had while asleep, that the old janitor was none other than Aongus and the long lost Saint. By his prayer and pure faith he had worked a miracle in removing the cloud from the boy's mind, and at the same time had taught a lesson of humility to the school.[1]

This little play is a dramatized version of an old legend from which Mr. Yeats drew his prose piece, 'Where There is Nothing There is God.' It would be interesting to make a comparison of these in detail, but suffice it to say here, that both are alike in ascribing miraculous power to Saint Aongus. Mr. Yeats, however, goes a step further, and carries the story into the realm of mysticism by saying that Aongus got his power, because he went away from the habitations of man into the mountains, where, alone, and by means of intuition, he found the place where there was nothing and where there was God. It may be noted that we have here the germ of Mr. Yeats' play of mysticism, 'Where There is Nothing.'

1. A play resembling this drama of Dr. Hyde's, though lacking its simple religious feeling, is Mr. Granville Barker's 'A Miracle.'

Mr. William Poel's 'The Temptation of Agnes' in a manner harks back to that prolific species of the old medieval morality, known as polemical or controversial, in which the doctrines of the Protestant and Catholic churches, respectively, were defended and attacked. This reversion, together with the fact that the play came directly out of the interest awakened by the revival of 'Everyman,' brings it within our purview. It will be recalled that Mr. Poel was the original reviver of this morality play. His studies in this field led to an interest in some of the episodes in the life and work of Saint Francis of Assisi, who found himself in conflict with the accepted and wide-spread authority of the Catholic church of his day. Some of these episodes Mr. Poel seized upon and arranged into dramatic form. "Arranged" is the proper word, for the author disclaims any originality for his play except in the treatment of the story. A large part of the dialogue is taken from the writings of the time, and many of the memorable sayings of Saint Francis and Saint Catherine are transcribed verbatim into the speeches of Bernard and Agnes, two of the leading characters of the play.

The original version was known as 'The

First Franciscans.' While Saint Francis was absent from his chapel, Saint Mary of the Little Portion, upon missionary work in the East, a section of the Brotherhood had become dissatisfied with the rigorous rules of fasting and poverty imposed by the founder, and had gained the consent of the Bishop for their relaxation. Saint Francis returned to find the Order torn by discord. He appointed one of the brethren head of the Order, and with Lady Poverty, a purely medieval personified abstraction, and other companions, he retired to Mount Alvernia. Later, after the news had reached the brethren at Saint Mary of the Little Portion that Saint Francis had received the Stigmata, he returned to the chapel where, after admonishing and blessing the Order, he passed away. His spirit, however, lived on among his faithful followers, but at the same time was antagonized by many of the Order. The delineation of this antagonism and its result is the basis of Mr. Poel's 'The Temptation of Agnes.'

The theme of this play is the bigotry and arrogance of the Catholic church. A youth, Lucido, on account of heretical tendencies, had been placed as a novitiate in the Franciscan Order, and had become the favorite of

Saint Francis, who with his characteristic forgiving spirit condoned many of the lad's faults. Lucido had thoroughly imbibed the doctrines of the infinite love of God taught by Saint Francis. Upon the death of the latter he found himself, consequently, in conflict with the narrow and more bigoted successors of the Saint. Lucido was dismissed from the Order, whereupon he accepted service in the household of the Count Favarino, a pronounced enemy of the Catholic church. Here he met and fell in love with the Count's daughter, the Lady Agnes, who had long contemplated taking the vows of a nun. This incensed the church authorities against him still further, for Lady Agnes was wavering in her intention to devote herself to the church in the growing reciprocation of her love for Lucido. The Pope interested himself in the case against Lucido, and sent an armed guard to arrest him if he did not subject himself to the Bishop's rule. This Lucido vehemently refused to do, and while resisting arrest, was killed by the guard.

This is the bare narrative of the play. Much of the text is taken up with an exposition of the discord between the two factions of the Order over the rules imposed by Saint Francis

during his life. These rules were opposed by the orthodox church, and the relaxation of them meant the acknowledgment of the authority of the church which Saint Francis had sought to reform by founding a new order which based its teachings solely upon the Sermon on the Mount. It was the annulment of this practical christianity by the successors of Saint Francis that inflamed Lucido into his irreconcilement with the Order and led him to reject the Bishop's authority. There are also two finely conceived and highly imaginative scenes between Lucido and Lady Agnes which are really remarkable in their effect, when one considers that much of the dialogue is adapted and not created by the author. The play depicts faithfully the life and atmosphere of the Italy of the Middle Ages.

While the author recognizes that there have been many pure, saintly lives devoted to the service of the Catholic church, and that this church has done much good in the uplifting of humanity, his play is, nevertheless, a direct attack upon it, and is a counterpart, conscious or unconscious, it is difficult to say which, of the movement going on in Ireland as exemplified in two of Mr. Yeats' plays, 'The Hour-Glass' and 'Where There is Nothing.'[1]

1. Above, p. 25.

In order that the author's correct attitude may be stated, unimpaired by any personal opinion that might inadvertently slip into an exposition, it is best to set down his own words found in the preface to his play:

"Francis preached the gospel of infinite Love. Everything the Creator had made, rich and poor, good and bad, beast, bird, and fish, were worthy of a man's devotion. Francis who renounced the world made God's wide world his own through Love. It was impossible for him to believe that any living creature could be placed outside of God's mercy.

"Now it is just this tolerance which the Roman Catholic church will not recognize. There is no place in her ordinance for the earnest inquirer who wishes to win God's grace independently of church dogma. Lucido, who has in his nature the making of a good citizen, and even of a good christian, must be branded a heretic and hunted out of existence as if he were an unfortunate hare at the mercy of the dogs of the sportsman. His life is forfeited because he refuses to make confession and submission to his Bishop who is a man of the world, living an indolent and self indulgent life under the shelter of the church that outwardly professes to exist for the benefit of the salvation of men's souls."

Mr. Edwin Milton Royle's 'The Struggle

Everlasting,' more than any play which has been considered, with the possible exception of 'Life's Measure,' employs the method of the old Morality. The characters are as near to abstractions as it is possible to draw them, and at the same time to make them conform to modern conceptions and demands. The aim of the author is to externalize the internal struggle always going on in each consciousness between the mental, the physical, and the spiritual in our natures. The principal characters, Mind, Soul, and Body, are types in which the mental, or spiritual, or physical struggles to predominate, while the subordinate characters are types of those affected by the struggle.[1]

At the beginning of the play Mind and Soul, brothers, are young men, undergraduates at the university. But Mind has reached the period in his development when he has become tired of the conventional teachings of the professors, and longs to learn life through his own experiences. One vacation he meets Body, the physical world, represented as a beautiful woman. The experience is wholly new to him, and he becomes infatuated with her. She

1. Foreword to the MSS. of the play.

seems life to him, and he vows never to return to school. Says he to her:

"You have inflamed me with a divine curiosity. I'll never go back. You'll give me up your element, your principle, your secret, or your number."

Body, being represented at first as mere physical life, is without either conscience or reason. But the coming of Mind has inflamed her also. She desires to know more of the meaning of phenomena about her, and especially she longs to know the meaning of herself.

"You see," she says, speaking to Mind, "you understand—you make me feel ashamed. I've only known the rocks and trees and the turbulent sea and the wild things of the forest, and the men wilder than the things. (Crouching at his feet) You will tell me what they mean. Perhaps you will tell me what I mean. I wish I knew! I wish I knew!"

She and Mind vow eternal allegiance to each other, and to her Mind replies:

"And so you shall. Down into the deeps, up into the heights, we'll go together, you and I."

But Soul interrupts the love scene, and warns Mind of the danger into which he is hastening. Soul denounces Body as a child of sin, an enemy of society, sin, sickness, poverty, and madness. He tells Mind he must return to the

university, but Mind indignantly replies:

"Go back to the shams, sophistries, hypocrisies of the world. I am sick of them. I want to be near to nature and truth. - - - I have found what it is to be free. Do you think I can go back to dull toil and obligation? - - - Here is a chance to study human nature in its elements, not as tortured and twisted by books and customs and accepted falsehoods."

In spite of the entreaties of Soul, who tells him that he can never force the truth unaided and alone—apart from God, and that he is subjecting himself to the enslavement of the physical, Mind succumbs to the dominion of Body, and declares his independence of Soul:

"Dear brother, I love you. I know you love me. You will not be led by me. I will not be led by you. We must go each his own way. You cannot force upon me hateful obligations; you shall not make me a victim of your sacrifices. You take a scourge, a whip to drive me back to God, but I won't be driven. I'll find God in my own time and my own way."

He returns to the university, but takes Body with him as his mistress.

We next meet Mind and Soul as they are graduating from the university. The time has come when they must face life and fight its battles. Mind has been living with Body, but now he means to cast her off and meet his

problems unencumbered. But Body has advanced in worldly knowledge and dominion, and will not be put aside.

"You shan't grovel before me in secret and be ashamed of me in public. I mean to be a partner in your life. I won't be your victim! I am your equal! - - - You'll find I can be reckless and relentless - - - I'll ruin you if I can, and I can! I can! I can!"

Her anger spent, Body takes another tack: she uses her old alluring and tempting power over Mind. And just as Mind is about to succumb to her charm, Soul points out to him his error, and tells him he must go alone into the world, fight alone, win alone; he must learn self-denial. Again Mind gains mastery over himself; but when he finds that there is another suitor for Body's hand, he grows jealous and weakly yields to her. But she has learned of her unlimited power.

"The world is before me! A world where you rule or are ruled; where you eat or are eaten—I have been a chattel, a plaything, a slave in the world that belongs to me—in a world that is mine."

Mind pleads with her not to desert him, and declares that he will follow her to the end of life; but he is restrained by Soul. Body goes

into the life of the world to the enjoyment of her terrible dominion.

The author in a scene at once the most vivid, the most realistic, and altogether the best in the play in dramatic power and tragic truth, shows us in panoramic view Body's victims in their anguish and final despair, after a few years of worship at her shrine. Mind fortified by reason has not fallen so irredeemably under her influence. But several of his college mates and friends who have been devotees have been ruined and cast off after they can be of no further use to her. The Athletic Trainer of university days has degenerated into a champion pugilist, and through his continual physical depravity in his attention to Body, has lost his title and is, consequently, turned away from her door; the Poet has developed into a great tragedian, but the society of Body has ruined his career and destroyed his mind; the Music-Master who had entranced her early in her career and had led her to a real knowledge of her power has prostituted his art, and has sunk to the itinerant street musician; the Captain of Industry, having forsaken his wife and home for the society of Body, becomes bankrupt, and finally seeks refuge in an almshouse.

Body has ruled with absolute sway in her kingdom, the world. She has run the gamut of passion and experience until, disgusted and surfeited with her own life and work, she yearns for something better. It is then that Soul comes to save her. But Mind thinks that she is not sincere and that she is only trying to bring Soul under her dominion to destroy him as she had destroyed others. But Soul is sure that she can be redeemed, and he risks everything to save her. Mind then turns to Body and tries to prevail on her to sacrifice herself and thereby save Soul. She is about to do so, when Soul intervenes and warns her that she cannot flee from obligation. He teaches both Mind and Body that service is the law of life; each has struggled to rule, but now each must struggle to serve, and in service find eternal harmony.[1]

When the difficulties of the task are thoroughly considered, one must say that Mr. Royle has succeeded to a marked degree in infusing life into his abstractions. We forget the abstract natures of Mind, Soul, and Body, as we watch them strive for ascendency over each other; and yet they are so subjectively delineated that personal application is inevita-

1. Compare Browning's "Rabbi ben Ezra," stanza 12.

ble. We know that it is a mirroring of the struggle constantly going on within ourselves, in which "one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." The theme is vital, the satire timely and telling; and it is really difficult to find anything within the play itself that will account for the unfavorable reception with which it met when it was produced.[1]

It is rather a discouraging outlook for American drama when a play of such genuine worth as Mrs. Josephine Peabody-Marks' 'The Piper' had to go abroad to find appreciation and production. So artistic a native product should have found an initial home in our own country. But it was no doubt gratifying to the author to find herself the winner over more than three hundred competitors of the Shakespeare Memorial prize, and still more to have her play given its first pre-

1. Upon this point Mr. Henry B. Harris, the well-known producer and manager, writes: "'The Struggle Everlasting' was one of the best plays I ever put on. But it failed—failed because the American public was not quite ready for the new style of morality play. The next year 'The Servant in the House,' a play of exactly the same sort, made a big success."—'New York Globe and Commercial Advertiser,' November 16, 1910.

sentation in the birthplace of the greatest of the world's dramatists. But England has a few men at least, whose regard for the worthy and artistic is above the sordid consideration of the box-office, that lode-star of American producers and managers. Sir F. R. Benson, than whom no man has done more for poetic drama, and his estimable company successfully essayed its production.

The play opens at the close of an old medieval miracle play of the rudest sort. The rats have already been charmed away, and the Piper asks for his stipulated pay, one thousand guilders. But delivered from their pest, the citizens refuse to keep their part of the bargain, attributing their deliverance to Saint Willibald instead of to the Piper whom they denounce as an outcast, a masterless dog without civil rights, and an impotent outlaw. While they are in the church saying mass in gratitude to Saint Willibald, the Piper strikes up the Kind-spell and allures all the children, headed by the little crippled Jan, to a haunted hollow in the hills. The people think this a punishment sent upon them by an offended heaven, and they force the Mayor, Jacobus, who more than any one else had been instrumental in withholding the Piper's rights, to

give up his daughter Barbara for a propitiation. As they march with her dressed as a bride to the monastery, the Piper begins the Dance-spell and the entire procession is bewitched. Barbara is rescued and given to Michael, the Sword-Swallower, with whom she had fallen in love at the miracle play. The Piper vows that he will never return the children to Hamelin, but under the influence of little Jan's mother, Veronica, in whom he discovers a living soul, he abandons his vengeance and leads the children home.

Upon this simple narrative the author has built a play into the fabric of which she has woven much humane sentiment and an inspiring philosophy of life. Idealism and materialism are the contrasted elements of her play, the former delineated in the character of the Piper, the latter in the people of Hamelin. It was not the thousand guilders the Piper cared for—ten would have served as well—but guilders were the soul of Hamelin, and the Piper's demand was a mortal stab. He wanted

" - - - but (to) show them how that daly fear
They call their faith, is made of blasphemies
That would put out the Sun and Moon and Stars,
Early, for some last judgment!
And the Lord,

Where will He get His harpers and singing-men
And them that laugh for joy?"[1]

Not from Hamelin, for Hamelin was wrapped up in social and religious intolerance and consuming greed, which kill the joys of life. Hamelin could watch a strolling mountebank show with pleasure, but in its selfishness and smug self-complacency it had no sympathy for the strollers. The picture which the Piper draws of his own strolling Mother to the motherhood of Hamelin sounds the depths of pathos, and is a plea for a broader and more humane sympathy:

" - - - - And she starved and sang;
And like the wind, she roved and lurked and shuddered
Outside your lighted windows, and fled by,
Storm-hunted, trying to outstrip the snow.
- - - - - - -
- - - - - - -
- - - - To you, a Nothing;
Nothing, forever, oh, you well-housed mothers!
As always, always for the lighted windows
Of all the world, the Dark outside is Nothing,
And all that limps and hides there in the dark."[2]

Love of children was a passion with the Piper; but Hamelin's conception of children was for

1. Act I.
2. Act II.

"Some one to work for me, when I am old;
Some one to follow me unto my grave;"[1]

And as the mission of the Piper was, as he says, to free all caged things, he drew the children from their Hamelin prison. Hamelin is but the author's symbol of the elements that sap the joy from life. It is Hamelin, she says,

"That turns the bright world black and the Sun cold
With hate and hoarding; - all - triumphant Greed
That spreads above the roots of all despair,
And misery, and rotting of the soul!"[2]

And Hamelin shall learn

"What's that creature that they call a child!—
And what this winged thing men name a heart
Beating queer rhythms that they long to kill.—
What is this hunger and this thirst to sing."[3]

The Piper, therefore, vowed that the children should not return to have their bright lives greyed and hardened by soulless Hamelin, and he saved the young life of Barbara from the prison walls of the nunnery. The author's picture of the children under the protection and teaching of the Piper is beautifully idealistic, and is in salutary contrast to the

1. Act III.
2. Act III.
3. Act III

prosaic, materialistic training of Hamelin.[1]

But the most inspiring moral of the play comes in a finely imagined scene of spiritual conflict between the Piper and Veronica. The latter for her crippled child's sake alone had married Kurt the Syndic, selling her own heart and buying herself nothing. She had wandered over the hills, ceaselessly looking for her Jan ever since the Piper had taken him away, and had come fearlessly into the haunted glen where the rest of superstitious Hamelin had not dared to go. She found the Piper and pleaded with him for her child. But the Piper would not yield, and the mother returned to Hamelin to die of her grief. The Piper's heart, however, had been touched by the true mother heart. He realized that her love for her child, "indomitable, deeply rooted in self-sacrifice," was holier than his own. With uplifted hands he stood before the Carven Christ, the Lonely Man, whom little Jan had always loved so well and whom he had always wished to see smile, and in a supplication of intense spiritual emotion worthy of transcription at length, he quieted the conflict in his own soul:

"I will not, no, I will not, Lonely Man!
I have them in my hand. I have them all -

1. Act II.

All - all! And I have lived unto this day.
You understand - - - (He waits as if for some reply.)
You know what men they are.
And what have they to do with such as these?
Think of those old as death, in body and heart,
Hugging their wretched hoardings in cold fear
Of moth and rust! - while these miraculous ones,
Like golden creatures made of sun-set cloud,
Go out forever, - every day, fade by
With music and wild stars! - Ah, but You know.
The hermit told me once, You loved them too.
But I know more than he, how You must love them;
Their laughter, and their bubbling, skylark words
To cool Your heart. Oh, listen, Lonely Man! -
- - - - - - - -
Oh, let me keep them! I will bring them to You,
Still nights, and breathless mornings; they shall touch
Your hands and feet with all their swarming hands,
Like showering petals warm on furrowed ground, -
All sweetness! They will make Thee whole again,
With love. Thou wilt look up and smile on us!
- - - - - - - -
Why not? I know - the half - You will be saying.
You will be thinking of Your Mother. - Ah,
But she was different. She was not as they.
She was more like - - - this one, the Wife of Kurt!
Of Kurt! No, no; ask me not this, not this!
Here is some dawn of day for Hamelin, - now!
'Tis hearts of men You want. Not mumbled prayers;
Not greed and carven tombs, not misers' candles;
No offerings, more, from men that feed on men;
Eternal psalms and endless cruelties! - - - -
Even from now, there may be hearts in Hamelin
Once stabbed awake!
(He pleads, defends, excuses passion-

ately, before his will gives way, as the arrow flies from the bow-string.)
- I will not give them back!
And Jan, - for Jan, that little one, that dearest
To Thee and me, hark - he is wonderful.
Ask it not of me. Thou dost know I cannot!
- - - - - - -
Look, Lonely Man! You shall have all of us
To wander the world over, where You stand
At all the cross ways, and on lonely hills, -
Outside the churches, where the lost ones go!
And the wayfaring men, and thieves and wolves
And lonely creatures, and the ones that sing!
We will show all men what we hear and see;
And we will make Thee lift Thy head, and smile.
- - - - - - -
No, no, I cannot give them all! No, no, -
Why wilt Thou ask it? - Let me keep but one.
No, no, I will not - - - -
- - - - - - -
- - - - Have Thy way. - I will!"[1]

The mother love and the Christ love had won. The Piper restored the children to their parents, recalled the dying Veronica to life and happiness in the gift of her little Jan, and in the midst of rejoicings went on out into the world again to pipe natural freedom and the joys of life to other Hamelins.

It is an inspiring theme artistically and convincingly developed; a philosophy of life wholesome, opportune, and deserving of wide dissemination. There is too much Hamelin

1. Close of Act III.

tradition in the lives of all of us, too much religious bigotry, too much social intolerance, too much soulless grasping for the merely ephemeral, too little consideration for the numberless little amenities which are the bloom and fragrance of life and love, and which, after all, are the only things worth striving for and possessing. The burden of the Piper's song is of universal application:

"Out of your cage,
Come out of your cage
And take your soul on a pilgrimage!
- Pease in your shoes an if you must! -
- But out and away, before you're dust;
Scribe and Stay-at-home,
Saint and Sage,
Out of your cage,
Out of your cage! - "

The extracts which we have given indicate sufficiently the literary value of the author's work. It is never mediocre, but almost always of genuine poetic quality. At times the imagination rises to great heights, as in the last act where the people of Hamelin are represented old and colorless after the loss of their children, and again in the scene in the cave where the children pipe and dance and sing for joy in the gleam of the rainbow. The play no doubt fails to measure up to the demands of true

drama, for the dramatist is more than once submerged in the poet. Yet in these sterile days we may indeed welcome a production so serious and so beautiful as this, in which technical blemishes are more than atoned for in uncommon literary quality.

We shall next consider two plays which in theme and purpose, though not in literary quality and dramatic power, may be called companion pieces, Jerome K. Jerome's 'The Passing of the Third Floor Back,' and Charles Rann Kennedy's 'The Servant in the House.' The scene of the former play is laid in the living room of a second-class boarding house in Bloomsbury Square, London. The epilogue reverts directly to the old Morality manner in presenting a group of personified vices: a Cheat, a Bully, a Hussy, a Satyr, a Coward, a Rogue, and a Cad, all guests of this boarding house, and all exemplifying the epithet that characterizes them. After the author has made an exposition of their characters, he brings to the house a person whom he denominates a Passer-by, who engages the third floor back, and who at once enters this unlovely circle. But, as the servant girl told the landlady when she announced the Passer-by, he was not like the rest. While the author at no time avowedly

depicts this Passer-by as the Christ, yet it is obvious it is He. At once his kind and gentle nature, his sweet voice, his benign countenance, and eyes that penetrate into the innermost recesses of these petty, marred souls, begin to have their influence.

After a month has elapsed, these characters are shown in a new light. The landlady has become honest, the swindler has repented, the bickerings of the husband and wife have given way to domestic felicity, the painted lady has thrown off her affectations and has become her real self, the artist has been made to see the true worth of himself and of his profession, and the girl who loves him, but who was about to sell herself to a dissipated wretch for the sake of luxury, asserts her self-respect and finds happiness with him. It is the Christ-idea at work among men; the reassertion of their own better natures which have lain dormant under strata of selfishness and sin. It is the cleansing power of the good, the true, the holy. And when happiness and hope and love have triumphed, and the circle has been transformed, the Passer-by with joy in his heart goes out into the night to allay the strife and worldly turmoil in other souls.

One wants to linger over this phase of the

drama, for unhappily it is a rare one on the stage to-day. But the success of this play, together with that of 'The Servant in the House,' indicates that such themes when adequately presented meet with sympathetic response, and demonstrates that the stage can be made a vehicle to teach men better ways and inculcate in them more wholesome thoughts. Something of the same sort of influence is felt in these plays as in 'Everyman.' Indeed, both plays in motive hark back to this old morality.

As we have called this play and 'The Servant in the House' companion pieces, it may be well to draw out some of their similarities and differences. Both conceive of a visit to a modern household by a Mysterious Stranger who is the incarnation of Christ, or the personification of the Christ-idea. Mr. Jerome leaves the postulating of Christ largely to the minds of his auditors and readers. He does not make the Passer-by resemble Christ, though he indicates the supernatural. Just before the Passer-by enters, a ray of light strikes across the stage, lingers there for a moment as he leaves, and after his work of transformation has been accomplished and he goes out into the night, his head is enveloped in a halo. On the other hand, Mr. Kennedy openly

manifests Christ in dress and action, while the name "Manson" is only an anagrammatic form of "Son of Man." In both, the influence of Christ is seen transforming the lives and natures of the individuals of both households, though Mr. Kennedy denies salvation to one of his characters. The Passer-by of Mr. Jerome comes on an equal footing with the other members of the Bloomsbury household; Mr. Kennedy sends his Visitor to a clergyman's vicarage in the guise of a servant, thereby setting himself a far more difficult task of exposition. Mr. Jerome's Stranger is the embodiment of mercy, working his reformation through gentleness and kindness; Mr. Kennedy's is stern, and at times almost assumes the character of an autocrat—he is a pronounced reformer. The sins which Mr. Jerome's Passer-by cleanses are bad and unhappily too common, while those in Mr. Kennedy's play are of the type of the earlier dramas of Ibsen, another influence for good or bad of this great Norwegian.[1]

Similarities so striking as these, and still others might be pointed out, suggest a debt on the part of one playwright to the other. Mr. Jerome's original version in short story form

1. 'Athenaeum,' November 14, 1908.

preceded by some years Mr. Kennedy's drama, but if the latter owes anything to the former, its author has assimilated the obligation in so individual a manner that his drama bears all the marks of an original production; while it is not too much to say that the success of 'The Servant in the House' led directly to the dramatization of Mr. Jerome's story.

In dramatic technique and literary value Mr. Kennedy's is the superior play. Instead of subtle psychological character analysis, Mr. Jerome gives only sketches. His play in plot, sequence, and dramatic value is not satisfying. There is too much evidence of the "made-to-order" in it—it lacks inevitability. The characters one by one take their turn with mathematical precision in appearing before the Passer-by as if purposely to be reformed. The action does not grow naturally out of the plot or the characters. Moreover, the play is not true to life. Complete transformation of character, as has been observed, comes gradually, not suddenly, and from the living of life, not from words alone.[1]

In spite of these shortcomings, however, one feels that Mr.Jerome's message is a more practicable one than Mr. Kennedy's and therefore

1. 'Literary Digest,' October 16, 1909.

broader in its appeal. At least it gives us something definite to do. It calls our attention to the little failures in our lives and in the lives of others, which we can constantly correct, while Mr. Kennedy bids us revolutionize church and state, quite an indefinite task. On the whole Mr. Jerome's play is one in which the message is uplifting, the moral unexceptionable and wholesome, but it has very small claim to a place in literature.

'The Servant in the House' has close affiliations with 'Everyman.' In the revival of the latter, the title role was taken by Miss Edith Wynne Matthison, wife of Mr. Kennedy, while that of the Doctor or Messenger who spoke the prologue and epilogue was taken by Mr. Kennedy himself. It is interesting to note also that both Mr. Kennedy and Miss Matthison played leading roles in Professor Gayley's 'The Star of Bethlehem,' a play which grew directly out of the influence of 'Everyman.' Such close relations with the medieval drama no doubt helped to give Mr. Kennedy inspiration for his morality of applied religion.

The theme of 'The Servant in the House' is the universal brotherhood of all mankind, and its appeal is for a religion of the heart,

not of the head. Its problem, if it has one, harks back to the time when God asked Cain the whereabouts of his brother, and reaches up to the present and asks the same question of the modern church, and will project itself into the future as long as the human spirit struggles upward. It is a biting satire on conventional religion. It is a "bitter smelling allegory of the church built over a festering tomb only to be cleaned up by a common laborer, proud of his station, and a vicar who throws away his cassock."[1]

The play is not one in which the plot is a striking feature. It contains only so much narrative as is necessary to keep it from being static, perhaps not enough even for that, as the play has been criticized for being slow of movement and overweighted with long dialogue. It is rather a drama of character interest than of plot interest. It contains seven characters, each of which, with the exception of the boy Rogers, is of equal importance for the author's purpose, and each of which he has delineated with equal care.

The Reverend William Smythe is a vicar in the Church of England. To native ability of high order he added the asset of university

1. 'The American Stage of Today' - Eaton, page 127.

training, and has made a place for himself among scholarly divines. It appears, however, that he was of humble origin, and that what he has finally become has not been entirely due to himself, but largely to the self-sacrifices of his two brothers, who having recognized his talent, picked and slaved the skin off their bones, as Robert says, to send him to school: "Cos we was proud of 'is 'ead-piece." The Vicar, however, as he climbed the ladder of success and married into a family of considerable High-Church repute, not only forgot the sacrifices of these two brothers, but came to consider himself so far risen in his own estimation of himself and in that of the world, as to look upon these brothers as much beneath him. Moreover, he regarded a recognition of them a burden which he was not called upon to carry. Along with this feeling, and under the influence of his wife whose social position was considerably above his own, he has lost sight of his true ministerial mission, and has become the type of clergyman, unhappily too familiar in the Christian church of today, whose main interest lies in the gratification of self, and whose chief desire is to gain the good opinion of people of high social distinction. In other words, he is the fashionable vicar of a fashionable church,

which had forgotten the example of the Master's attitude toward humility and toward the poor and unfortunate of the world. Mr. Kennedy aims to depict him as the type of clergyman who is really doing more harm than good in the church, and whose life and example are surely pointing to the cessation of the true mission of the church.

The Vicar's religion has become one of dogma and ritual, one in which forms and ceremonies dominate. He has forgotten entirely the practice of the Golden Rule and the doctrine of human brotherhood, though he continues to preach them. And herein lies the tragedy in his own soul. He is no longer what he professes to be. Self-interest and hollow form have all but sapped the life-blood of his religion, and he is beginning to pay the penalty. His church is filled with empty pews, and even his fashionable parishioners now stand on the street corner, drinking in the words of an atheist. The church itself has fallen into decay and exhales a putrescent odor. People will not attend. Curiously enough, and here comes in one part of the author's allegory, the smell is not so bad in the pews; it is quite noticeable in the choir, while in the pulpit it is almost unbearable. But more curious still is

the fact that it is just as bad, or even worse, in the Vicar's study; indeed it seems to originate there. The Vicar has tried all the modern methods of raising funds to repair the church, such as bazaars, socials, fairs, etc., but has not succeeded in arousing any interest among his people. He has almost given up in despair, when he receives a letter from the Bishop of Benares, whose fame has extended from India to England for the wonderful church he has built, and for his extraordinary power among the people. Much to the Vicar's astonishment, the Bishop of Benares is his brother Joshua, of whom he has heard nothing for years, but whom he can welcome now as a man who has attained great dignity and repute.

The kindness of this long lost and neglected brother, who with true Christian spirit comes to help the Vicar in his spiritual difficulty, strikes a chord in the Vicar's soul which has not vibrated for a long time. But if he has treated this brother with neglect, he has treated another, Robert, with open contumely. Smitten in conscience, the Vicar begins to feel that if he has a mission in the world, and if the church has a mission, both must include just such outcasts as Robert. The latter's characterization of him was only too true: " 'E

might a-made a man o' me once, if 'e'd tried; but 'e didn't - 'im and 'is like' ".

Robert's words are at once an index to his own character and to his attitude toward life and the church. Time was, as he himself says, when he did not have a bad nature. But the ingratitude of his brother, and the storms and buffetings of a pitiless, relentless world had soured the milk of human kindness in him; while the modern church, as he conceived of it, had no place for such as he in its fold. As a consequence, he had sunk lower and lower in the social scale until he had become a drunkard, a hater and reviler of God and man, with the unsavory occupation of a drain-cleaner as a means of livelihood, and with socialism in its most radical form as a religion. Mr. Kennedy means to show in Robert a type of laborer who is constantly growing more numerous, and who is the logical outcome of modern commercialism and modern civilization. Robert has been led to look upon Christianity as a symbol of oppression, largely because his brother, the Vicar, had treated him with scorn, and had taken from him his own daughter, when he had fallen so low as to be unable to provide for her himself after the death of his wife, fifteen years before. During these years he had not seen

his child, for on account of his own follies, and especially because of his occupation, he had been denied admittance to the refined home of his proud brother. But in those years the standard of life of the working man had risen, he had gradually become so important in the economy of civilization as to be a force to be reckoned with, and Robert had risen with his class. He had a better outlook on life and a better inlook into his own soul. With the consciousness of his importance and improvement, and with a spirit ready to be militant against any sort of class oppression, he has come, in spite of the Vicar's request that he stay away, to see his daughter, and to be present at the drain-cleaning of his brother's study and church.

Mary is a bright buoyant girl just entering conscious womanhood. She has been reared among the refining influences of the Vicar's home with all the love that he and his wife could have bestowed on a child of their own. She has been brought up with a full sense of the importance of class distinction, but has not yet arrived at the age when her uncle's religious practices have taken root in her mind. Rather, her impressionable nature has been filled with his precepts to right living, and she

is eager to give them outward manifestation in kind deeds. She breakfasts with old blind and deaf Granny Durden, and is anxious to help her father, whom she mistakes for a thief, to a sense of higher and better things. But she has also arrived at an age when she begins to think of her own condition. She has all along accepted the love and kindness of her uncle and aunt without question. But she has begun to think of her own father, and wonders why she knows so little about him, and why she has never been told of him. The void in her life grows suddenly large, and her heart aches. Consequently, when she and Manson play at wishing, her soul is filled with the want of her father.

The one most responsible for Mary's ignorance of her father is her aunt, the Vicar's wife. Born and bred an aristocrat, she has always possessed innate contempt for the working class. When she became the wife of the Vicar, she incurred the displeasure of her brother, the Bishop of Lancashire, because she had married beneath her station. Since then, consequently, it has been the sole and continuous effort of her life to raise her husband to a position of high repute in the world. In doing this, she has been the chief instrument in sundering the

ties that have attached him to his brothers, and indeed has been largely responsible for his false attitude to himself and to the things that deep in his heart he really cherishes. Not that she is a worldly woman in the common meaning of that term. She is kind in her home and loves her husband and her niece dearly. She is selfish and ambitious, not for herself, but for her husband. Her whole thought, almost to the exclusion of her personal religion, is for him and his advancement. Her religion has been transformed into an idolatrous husband-worship. She has kept Mary absolutely ignorant of her father, largely for the sake of her husband's reputation. It would not do for the world to know that he has a brother who has been a drunkard, and who is a common working-man. She has never quite lost hope of a reconciliation with her brother, whose recognition of her husband would mean all the worldly advancement even she could desire. Consequently, she has seized the opportunity of the coming of the Bishop of Benares, to bring her brother into their home.

Upon this brother, the Bishop of Lancashire, Mr. Kennedy heaps all the force of his invective. He is exactly what the Vicar describes him, a Bishop of stocks and shares! A Bishop

of the counting house! A Bishop of mammon! A gaitered snob posing as a servant of God. His entire conception of the church is not the good it will do, but how much it can be made to pour into his own coffers. He is quite ready to embrace Manson's baiting suggestion to grab all they can of the church fund. He is the vampire of the Church of God, who would stop at nothing so long as it was done secretly. This is the Bishop whom the Vicar's wife had invited to meet with her husband and the Bishop of Benares to consult over the rebuilding of the decayed and drain-stenched church.

Here, then, is a group of characters whose souls are warped, whose lives have ceased to vibrate with harmonious music, and whose feet have wandered from the path of right and duty in which God had placed them. To this group gathered in the breakfast room of the vicarage comes Manson, the Bishop of Benares, a long lost brother of the Vicar, and Mr. Kennedy's replica of the Christ.[1] From the very beginning he is depicted as a man of extraordinary and mysterious power; he has had wonderful success in India in building up a church

1. For an entirely different method of working out this motive, comparison should be made with Hauptman's 'Hannele.'

whose membership runs into the millions. He has come now, ostensibly, to help his brother regenerate his church, but he finds that his first mission is to regenerate some souls. In the disguise of an Indian butler he begins his work by smiting the conscience of the Vicar with a sense of his hypocrisy. The Vicar's confession to his wife shows that the iron has entered his soul: "I am a *good man*! I don't drink, I don't swear, I am respectable, I don't blaspheme like Bletchley! Oh, yes, and I am a *scholar*: I can cackle in Greek; I can wrangle about God's name; I know Latin and Hebrew and all the cursed little pedantries of my trade. But do you know what I am? Do you know what your husband is in the sight of God? He is a *Liar*!" The years of mistreatment of his brother Robert, the same years of deception toward his niece Mary, convict him of his false attitude toward God and man. His repentance begun, his regeneration is soon accomplished in the hearty recognition of Robert, in his new insight into the dignity of labor, and in his going with Robert to cleanse the deadly drains under the church.

But Robert also had something to learn. He had come to his brother's home with his heart full of bitterness and hatred. He also, but in

a different way, had lost the sense of brotherly feeling. But when Manson meets him more than half way upon his own ground and gently probes his heart, his better nature, which, after all, was bruised, not crushed, begins to reassert itself, and his soul is led back into the sunlight and purified to meet the purified souls of hs brother and daughter.

It is with the Vicar's wife, however, that Manson has the hardest struggle. The basic tenet of her religion is respectability—active love for those beneath her station in life finds no lodgment in it. Her burning ambition is the worldly repute of her husband. Her life has been spent for this, and to bring about its accomplishment she has not only distorted his soul and her own, but she has trampled the rights of others under her feet. The soul of her husband, tortured with its guilt, finds no sympathy from her when its cure depends upon an open recognition of Robert. The stained windows and sky-reaching spire of the prospective church whose pulpit her husband is to fill appeal to her far more than the religion dispensed within the church, while the questionable source of funds with which to build finds no consideration with her. She fights the repentant soul of her husband, until

fully aware of the hypocrisy and godlessness of her own brother's schemes, and under the influence of Manson who almost uses force, her will is finally broken and the tumult in her soul is calmed.

Short work is made of the Bishop of Lancashire. He stands as one already condemned. His spiritual blindness has completely entered the eclipse. His idea of a church is the complete antithesis of that the Master left with his servants, which Manson describes, and which is the other side of the author's allegory. To the Bishop he says:

"I am afraid you may not consider it an altogether substantial concern. It has to be seen in a certain way, under certain conditions. Some people never see it at all. You must understand, this is no dead pile of stones and unmeaning timber. It is a living thing.

"When you enter it you hear a sound—a sound as of some mighty poem chanted. Listen long enough, and you will learn that it is made up of the beating of human hearts, of the nameless music of men's souls—that is, if you have ears. If you have eyes, you will presently see the church itself—a looming mystery of many shapes and shadows, leaping sheer from floor to dome. The work of no ordinary builder!

"The pillars of it go up like the brawny trunks of heroes: the sweet human flesh of men and women is moulded about its bulwarks, strong, impregnable: the faces of little children laugh out from every corner-stone: the terrible spans and arches of it are

the joined hands of comrades; and up in the heights and spaces there are inscribed the numberless musings of all the dreamers of the world. It is yet building—building and built upon. Sometimes the work goes forward in deep darkness: sometimes in blinding light: now beneath the burden of unutterable anguish: now to the tune of a great laughter and heroic shoutings like the cry of thunder. Sometimes, in the silence of the night-time, one may hear the tiny hammerings of the comrades at work up in the dome—the comrades that have climbed ahead."

But if in such a church the Bishop can find no place, Robert can, and he offers the services of a drain-man in its construction.

We respectfully invite the attention of those who can find nothing worthy in the drama of the present day to a consideration of this play. In the first place the theme is not only new, at least new to modern times, but it is in every respect worthy. The play is cast in the broad mold of non-sectarianism, is entirely independent of any and all creeds except the universal one of the brotherhood of all mankind, and its corollary, the observance of the Golden Rule; in fact it is quite marked in its contempt for dogma of all sorts, and has, thereby, a wider appeal. Furthermore, one would cast about a long time to find illustrations more vital and motives more genuinely human. Its satire is true and timely and its message uplifting.

In manner the play is no less satisfying. Though the characterizations at times may fall somewhat short of their possibilities, and in the case of the Bishop of Lancashire degenerate into caricature, yet on the whole they are delineated with subtle psychological instinct. The unities of time and place are rigidly adhered to, the whole play in fact being of absolutely compact structure. Though divided into acts, it is in reality one continuous scene broken by climaxes in the development of the emotion. Its technique, as has been said of it, is a combination of the Greek and Ibsen.[1] All these circumscriptions which the author set himself make for difficulty, and the success with which he has overcome it renders his play all the more remarkable. We assert without hesitation that this drama contains the requisite qualities of dramatic and literary art.

1. Aside from the technique, Mr. Kennedy employs the familiar Greek theme of the recognition of father and child.

THE NATIVITY GROUP

Just as the past decade has witnessed a renewed interest in the Morality, expressing itself both in revivals of old plays and in original productions, so there has been an interest in Nativity plays, manifesting itself in the same ways. In the case of the latter, however, there has been neither so large a number of original productions, nor any, with the possible exception of Mr. Laurence Housman's 'Bethlehem,' so significant in merit. This is to be explained in part by the essentially restricted nature of the theme, and by the sacredness of its character. But these modern Nativity plays depart from the directness and concreteness which characterize the old plays of this type, and are, in the desire of their authors to inculcate spiritual truths and ethical instruction in right living, really simple moralities.

But it is no part of our purpose, nor does it fall within the scope of this study, to consider every play in which the birth of the Savior is the central event. Plays which deal with the Nativity are numerous. Every Christmas-tide witnesses the production of several of these, almost uniformly made up of conventional carols, and of incidents of bible narrative immediately concerned with the birth of Jesus, to be used chiefly in connection with religious

worship. They are seldom shot through either with a gleam of poetic or of dramatic art. Plays of this sort are common in the more pretentious churches, especially in the Catholic, of all large cities, and in many small ones as well. Such, to name what is perhaps the best play of this type, is Father Benson's 'A Mystery Play in Honour of the Nativity of Our Lord,' which partakes largely of the nature of a pageant, but which calls for no more than a mention. Plays, however, like Dr. Hyde's 'A Nativity,' Mr. Arthur Symons' 'Mary in Bethlehem: A Nativity,' Miss A. M. Buckton's 'Eager Heart,' and Mr. Housman's 'Bethlehem,' are all of importance for their strong "morality" motive and for their literary merit.

There is, too, another class of plays which have to do with events in the life and work of the Savior, but with which we are not concerned. To this class belong such quasi-religious productions as 'Ben Hur,' 'The Prince of India,' 'The Sign of the Cross,' 'Quo Vadis,' 'Mizpah,' and many others of the same type. In these plays the religious theme is not the central one;—they are built for spectacle, are melodramatic, and, above all, do not possess the "breadth and scope of truth."

'The Star of Bethlehem' by Professor C. M. Gayley of the University of California, prepared at the suggestion of Mr. Ben Greet and with his critical assistance, is a unique attempt to adapt the best acting scenes of the Nativity plays, in something like the original language, to the conditions of the modern stage. As no single play was of sufficient length to conform to present day demands, the author used as a basis the 'Offering of the Magi' and the 'Secunda Pastorum' of the Towneley cycle, into which he inserted passages of the 'Annunciation' and of 'Lazarus' of the same cycle; 'The Angels and the Shepherds' and 'The Coming of the Three Kings' from the York cycle; 'The Salutation and Conception,' 'Birth of Christ,' 'Adoration of the Shepherds,' and 'Adoration of the Magi' from the Coventry Corpus Christi; 'Processus Prophetarum' and 'Antichrist' from the Chester. He made some use also of the legend of the 'Three Kings of Cologne.'[1] His main object was to show the modern public the realistic dramatic art that our ingenuous forefathers who lived in the infancy of our drama enjoyed, and the "simplicity and sublimity" with which they regarded the Nativity events which formed its subject matter and vital spirit.

1. 'The Star of Bethlehem,' XVIII.

The play is not only intrinsically interesting in its arrangement and content, but for our purpose is important in showing the renewed interest in English medieval drama, which followed immediately upon the revival of 'Everyman,' and which was, beyond doubt, due to the success made by that worthy old morality. Mr. Ben Greet, who brought 'Everyman' to America, has played no small part in making known to us the spirit and the stage-craft of much of the older drama. His efforts in this direction must have been prompted largely by the scholar's and the artist's attitude, for the financial return could never have been attractively lucrative. It was this spirit that led to the production of the 'Star of Bethlehem,' which had its first presentation in Boston, January twenty-fifth, nineteen hundred and four, running for eight performances and scoring a considerable success. Since that time it has been often produced publicly and privately in many of the city theaters, and at colleges and universities. Its combination of humor and solemnity has always made an impressive effect.

'The Little Town of Bethlehem' by Mrs. Katrina Trask is a Christmas-tide play, designed to show the attitude of the Roman and Jew-

ish people to the Savior, and, by contrast, His attitude to them and to the world. It sets forth also the more enlightened Greek thought in the person of the poet Cariston, whose superior culture had led him to conceive of an "Unknown God," and whose mind was thus prepared for an easy acceptance of the Savior.

Mrs. Trask has overlaid the events in the life and work of the Savior with so romantic a love story that the sacred elements in her play are all but submerged. We are not concerned with this romance, but it may be noted in passing that the influence of the "Ben Hur" type of drama is evident. Mrs. Trask's primary intention, however, is far above the spectacular motive of the older pseudo-religious play.

A point to be distinctly noted in this play, and one that differentiates it from most plays of the type, is that neither the Virgin nor Christ is represented on the stage. This method is to be commended in the highest degree, for in these latter days it is almost impossible to portray the Master with the reverence due His sacred character. The first part of the play, consequently, is largely scenic and recitative. The Shepherds and the Kings seek the new-born Savior, but there is no adoration

scene. The stable is represented, from the interior of which the voice of the Mother is heard in songs of love and worship for her Child. The outside world passes by, a part of it to be blessed and redeemed by the holy influence of the Manger, a part of it to hurl scorn and blasphemy upon the Child within. But what this part of the play lacks in dramatic force, it realizes in reverence that is at once sincere and appealing.

The chief protagonist in the play is Faustina, a noble lady of the Roman court, who in her pride and haughtiness refused to aid the Virgin, when the latter applied at the Bethlehem inn on the night the Savior was to be born. After the birth in the manger, Faustina was "part of the world who heaped scorn and ridicule" upon the Mother and Child. It was not long, however, until she was stricken with leprosy. She fled to the mountains, where for thirty years she lived an outcast. The Child which she had ridiculed had, during these years, grown to manhood, and was going through the land, preaching his gospel and performing his miracles. A maiden, who herself had been a leper, and who had found healing at the hands of the Savior, pleaded with Faustina to go to the Great Physician.

But Faustina realized that once she had done Him a terrible wrong. Finally, but with hesitation and fear in her heart, she sought the Master, who with loving forgiveness healed both her body and soul.

Mr. Arthur Symons in his 'Mary in Bethlehem: A Nativity,' approaches the subject from a different view point from that of other writers who have dealt with the theme. They have considered the subject from the divine side, conceiving of Mary as the passive recipient of divine favor and honor. Mr. Symons, on the other hand, has delineated the human side of the motherhood: the wonder, the anxiety, and the fear that would naturally enter the mind of one who had received the angel's annunciation, and who had borne a child in so divine and mysterious a way. He makes a psychological analysis of the soul of Mary, setting forth the misgivings that would be humanly natural. The coming of the Shepherds and Kings are to her a manifestation and proof of the divine mission of her Son, a full realization of which she had not before had.

The scene is the stable of Bethlehem. Mary has just awakened from a troubled dream in which she saw a mighty city filled with people

running and shouting. In their midst were three figures carrying crosses which bore them to the earth with their weight. The face of one of them she seemed to know. With tears streaming down her face, she awoke; but finding her child peacefully sleeping at her side, she was comforted.

Then comes the beautiful and pathetic soliloquy of Mary, voicing the uncertainty, the fear, the hopes of the human mother heart. She recalls when the angel appeared to her while she was still only the espoused of Joseph, and announced God's intention. Her reply, "Behold the hand-maid of the Lord," were words she feared to understand. And since a child has been marvelously born to her, she feels that God must be working out some great design through her. But the angel has come no more, and she can but wait and dream and be afraid.

The Shepherds come to the stable, and the words of Joseph, unconsciously to himself, establish for them the proof of the new-born Savior. But as they kneel and worship, Mary with wondering heart, asks:

" - - - - why (do)
You come - - - -
And kneel before my child, and pray
As if the stable where we lie
Were holy, or the Lord were nigh?"

The Shepherds relate to her the appearance of the angel to them, but this bewilders her still more. Joseph, too, doubts. He cannot understand why God would reveal himself to ignorant Shepherds and not to Herod, the great King, and asks Mary if she were sure it was God's angel who had spoken to her. Then, led by the Star, come the Kings of the East, bringing gifts and announcing the finding of the King of Kings and His throne. To Mary's questions, "Where is this throne? And where is he?" they reply that her babe in the manger is the new-born King of the world. Then is Mary convinced, and her soul is at peace. She no longer hopes or fears, for she sees that

> " - - the Son of God must be
> As God is, human yet divine."

The human heart of the mother rejoices that her child is not less to her because it is God.

'A Nativity' by Dr. Douglas Hyde is an admixture of Irish folk lore and bible story. Two women have met outside the stable in Bethlehem, one carrying a flock of flax, the other a cherry-tree branch. Each is in search of a woman to whom she has done a wrong. One relates that a man and a woman, tired with their journey, asked her for a night's lodging, but that she, afraid of incensing her husband,

refused them and sent them to the stable to sleep upon the flax. In the night her husband became sick, and the wife went to the stable to ask help of those she had sent there. They gave her some husks of flax, telling her to apply them to the sick man. She did so, and he was immediately healed. When she returned to the stable to express her gratitude, the people were gone, but she fancied that she heard a voice saying:

> "A meek woman and a rough man;
> The Son of God lying in husks."

Repentant, and ashamed of her act, she has followed them to Bethlehem in the hope of helping the woman in her trying ordeal.

But if this woman has done a wrong, the other has committed a greater one; for it was the hardness and misery in her own heart that made her refuse some cherries to the maiden when she asked for them. But she did refuse her, and immediately the tree bent down and offered the maiden its fruit. And now the woman has come to Bethlehem to ask pardon and offer help.

But as they are about to knock at the stable door, they see Kings approaching from the east and Shepherds from the west. The Kings tell how they have followed the star, while the

Shepherds relate that an angel had appeared to them and had directed them come to Bethlehem to search for the joy that had come into the world. When they were ready to start, they looked up and saw many birds flying in one direction. They followed, and the birds had guided them to the stable. The youngest King and the youngest Shepherd, because they have had least occasion to do wrong, are chosen to knock on the door. Joseph invites all of them in, and they worship the new-born Child and present their gifts. The two women realize now that the woman whom they have mistreated is the mother of Jesus. Oppressed with their grief, they hasten to leave; but Mary assures them that all are welcome to the Master's cradle, and especially those who come asking forgiveness.

The Christmas "Mystery" play, 'Eager Heart,' by Miss A. M. Buckton departs from the conventional Nativity type in that it does not have Bethlehem for its scene, does not center directly around the birth of the Savior, and does not draw to any great extent on the events as related in the Bible. It is rather a morality than a simple "mystery," as its dramatis personae are, in the main, abstractions, and its chief motive, plainly "moral." It represents

the search of the world of the twentieth century for the Prince of Peace, and shows how many fail to find him, because of wrong attitudes of mind and heart, and because of false conceptions of his mission and meaning.

Eager Heart, relying upon a tradition that at each Christmas-tide the Savior makes a triumphal progress through the world in commemoration of his lowly birth, has saved a portion of her own frugal meal, and has prepared a couch in her humble home with the hope that the Savior might enter and make her heart his Bethlehem. Her sisters, Eager Fame and Eager Sense, ridicule her simple thoughts, and scoff at the idea that so great a King would be content with her humble surroundings. They tell her that it is folly to think that He would enter such a quiet street, that His progress is where "great chariots pass, where Victory pageants roll." Eager Fame desires that she come with her to the Capitol,

"Where famous deeds are done and tapestries
Blazon the walls with tales of Heroes dead!
Where Fame rules and where men worship."

Eager Sense desires that she go with her to the palace where are joy and feasting in honor of His coming. But Eager Heart refuses. The voices of the world outside shout the coming of

the Lord, and she, afraid that she will miss Him, goes out to mingle with the multitude, hoping perchance to prevail upon Him to bless her humble home.

At her threshold she meets a man and a woman travel-stained and poorly clad, who beg food and shelter. The woman carries a child in her arms. Eager Heart hesitates, for her preparations have been made for the Savior—not for beggars. The travelers tell her that they have applied everywhere, but have received only a few crusts of bread from some shepherds. At the palace was so much merriment that their voices could not be heard; at the Capitol Eager Fame spoke an unintelligible language. Finally, yielding to the travelers' appeal, Eager Heart leads them to her chamber, but immediately leaves to join the throngs that seek the Savior.

At this point the scene changes to the Shepherds among their flocks in the hills. They are watching the star, which seems to grow brighter on Christmas Eve. But the Young Shepherds have ceased to hope, and the star means nothing to them. Murmurings and dissensions at the miseries and inequalities of men, the hopelessness of the mass of humanity, the injustice of man to man, have blotted out any significance the star may once have had.

But to the Old Shepherd, gray with age and labor, "the sign He gave of old is the sign to-day." And when Eager Heart and the Voices of the seeking world come to the Shepherds, and they go to join in the search, the Old Shepherd tells them that the Lord has already passed by while they have been "prating of their ills."

Then come the Three Kings whom the author conceives as the impersonations of Power, Wisdom, and Love. Each seeks the Savior with a desire in his heart: Power, to know if there is a mightier King than himself, one whom he can worship; Wisdom, to know the mysteries of life, of death, and of the soul, and of the Life behind all these, the Son of Man; Love, to find Him

> " - - - - - - - whose soul,
> Measuring itself in Heaven, and earth and hell,
> Utters with every breath the great desire
> Of all that lives."

This desire and this utterance is Peace. Guided by the Star, they join Eager Heart and the Shepherds, and follow it to its resting-place above Eager Heart's own humble roof. She has been seeking far and wide for her Savior, and returns to find that, unawares, she had already ministered to His wants. As they all

bow down in adoration, Eager Fame and Eager Sense return to find that they have been seeking in the wrong way, and that the door is now shut against them. They are led away, the first to purify her soul in humility, the other in suffering and pain. The Epilogue announces the moral:

" - - - the faithful feed in bliss,
The foolish turn to find true nobleness.
Say, gentle listener, at this Christmastide,
Is your heart ready? Are your doors flung wide?
Hath He come in with you to make His stay,
Or hath He passed already on His way?"

The author's purpose in this drama is, in part, the delineation of the various attitudes of the world of the present day to the Savior. In Eager Heart she represents the yearnings of those whose faith is simple, sure, and serene, and whose religion is based on humility; in Eager Fame, those whose aims are centered on great deeds and great ambitions, forgetful of the true nature of the Savior's character; in Eager Sense, those whose lives are passed in pleasure, who are oblivious to the toil and suffering around them; in the Old Shepherd, the simple pristine faith which rough experiences and adversities have only strengthened; in the Young Shepherds, the murmurings of many hearts torn by the injustice found

in the world, and the difficulty of believing in an all-righteous King who permits such conditions to exist; the First King is Power, the force of the human will, to which thousands of other wills less strong are subject, but which, in turn, seeks a yet stronger Will to obey, and about which it can move harmoniously; the Second King is Wisdom, who has watched from the beginning of time the flow and ebb of life, trying to solve its mystery, seeing beneath it assurances of a higher, nobler existence made possible by Him who conquered the enemy of life; the Third King, he of the Lonely Heart, is Love, who goes through the earth joining the hands of those who hate, healing the wounds of enmity and strife, seeking Him

" - - - Whose glory 'tis, in a thousand forms,
To rule by yielding—die, to know and love—,
Him whose name is Peace."

It is a far cry from the simple drama performed about the *praesepe* in the tenth century to Mr. Laurence Housman's 'Bethlehem' in the twentieth. In spirit, too, his play is equally far removed from that of the cyclical Miracle plays with their lack of style, and their incongruous interpolations of crude, boisterous humor into sacred story. There is absolutely nothing about Mr. Housman's play to suggest

medievalism. On the other hand, it is so unique and so modern, both in conception and in execution, that the author himself felt the need of explanation and justification. He says: "I wish to show that it is possible for the drama to come near without irreverence, to the central truths of Christianity and by symbolic action to quicken the imagination of the beholders so as to make the beauty of holiness more evident, so as to make time seem a very little thing when the great spiritual ideas which have molded the world's history are concerned, so as to startle men's minds to a realization of whether for them Christianity is a curious relic of the past or a truth still living and central."[1] This explains the absence of anything approaching a realistic setting. In the play time is an unknown quantity, for the spirit of the author's conception is that Bethlehem is a fact regardless of past, present, or future, not to be commemorated or rehearsed, but to be set forth as an ever-present, living truth.

"The world is old, tonight,
The world is old;
The stars around the fold
Do show their light, do show their light.

1. 'Critic,' February, 1903.

And so they did, and so
A thousand years ago,
And so will do, dear love, when you lie cold.

"The world is still, tonight,
The world is still;
The snow on vale and hill
Like wool lies white, like wool lies white.
And so it was, and so
A thousand years ago,
And so will be, good lads, when we lack will."

"In spiritual matters," he says, "everything *is*, nothing was." Hence he takes no account of the various anachronisms profusely scattered throughout the play; the Shepherds, therefore, do not appear in the play as racial, while the Kings are not individuals, but are symbols of "the kingly in mind, thinkers and seers of the human race who bring their desires to God to be by Him enlightened and satisfied."[1]

It is this symbolism also that removes the play in its execution far from that of the old Nativity plays of medieval England, which were frankly real. Instead, Mr. Housman's is modern, Pre-Raphaelite, and mystical. It is shorn completely of external incident. Things familiar in the representation of the sacred theme, the manger, the straw, the ass, the ox, are omitted. The key-note of the whole play is

1. Ibid.

struck in the passage of mystic love spoken by the chorus:

" - - - - - - - in heart we kneel,
With, at our hearts, this prayer,—that ye may feel
How in Love's hands time is a little thing!
And so shall Love tonight your senses bring
Back to the hills of Bethlehem, the fold
Where shepherds watch their sheep, where angels told
Of peace, good will to men, in Christ new-born,
By whom, from Virgin Birth, our flesh grows warm."

Mr. Housman divides his play into acts, but it is rather a succession of episodic scenes: the Shepherds, the seeking Kings, and the Adoration. It does not as, for example, does Mrs. Katherine Tynan Hinkson's 'Our Lord's Coming and Childhood,' embrace the events from the Annunciation to the Flight in Egypt, nor does it follow the usual manner of the complete Nativity cycle of the early centuries of the drama. On the other hand, it is more in the manner of those detached or undeveloped portions of the larger cycle, commonly played in the smaller towns and outlying districts of medieval England.[1]

In the first scene the author has expended

1. I wish to express here my indebtedness to Mr. E. K. Chambers' admirable review of the play in the 'Academy,' December 27, 1902.

great effort to attain the utmost simplicity, especially in the delineation of the Shepherds. He has made them ordinary, peasant, and almost elemental. They are the Shepherds of Milton's Nativity Ode—

"Perhaps their loves—perhaps their sheep
It was that did their silly thoughts, so busy keep."

Isolated from the great stream of life, and with their natures uncontaminated by contact with the world outside of their own circumscribed horizon, their thought-processes are simple in the extreme. The stars bewilder them:

"You never seem to get no nearer to a star
Walk after 'em a mile—they will seem just as far."
"That star - - - - - -
You think he don't know what he's shining for!
Look at him jerking and working, and a-winking
and a-blinking:—
Well,—that's him thinking."

Gabriel comes across the sheepfolds toward them, and at so unusual a happening they huddle fearfully under the rock. He announces to them the birth of the Savior. Mr. Housman has been careful to make this not wholly unexpected by them, but at the same time to leave them bewildered and simply credulous:

" - - - - - Lord, Lord, I doubt
Whether I'll know to find me way about
With such high things a-happening! - -

There ain't much show about the likes o' we,
But what I say's—if this be true—well, well,
'Tis the best news that ever I heard tell!"

But with the assurance that they will be received and their simple gifts accepted, accompanied in the representation of the play by the halt, the blind, and the poor, symbolizing that the new-born Christ has come for all mankind, they take the road to Bethlehem.

The scene between Gabriel and the Three Kings is equally well conceived. We have already quoted the author's own words as to the symbolic intent of the Kings. They belong to no specific time, and they rule over no empire;—they are wholly unindividualized. They represent the unwearied quest of the ages for the expected Son of God. Their hearts yearn for the fulfillment of the hopes of the world, for the exaltation of soul over body, for the cessation of the world's strife in a common Redeemer, and for the completion of God's creation in the union of God and man.

The adoration scene is unique in two ways: first, in the wholly original and beautiful fancy of the knocking at the gate of Bethlehem by the Shepherds and later by the Kings; and secondly, in the author's complete and singular departure from tradition. The scene is full of the deepest emotion, but it is recitative and

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static. It is one long crescendo rather than a progression.[1] Instead of the simple conception usual in the Nativity plays of other modern writers, here is the apparent desire to symbolize and spiritualize.[2] The aim has been to try to realize to the hearts of men the appeal of the Nativity events. The author himself says on this point: "Love comes to earth, is recognized and worshipped by the humble and the pure-hearted, is driven away by the hatred of the proud. The world resumes its way, the manger is empty. The heavenly signs remove themselves."[3] The morality motive of the whole play is expressed by the closing chorus:

"Love is gone forth into the world, to win
Saints to their rest, and sinners back from sin.
Gentles, O ye that here have watched our play,
Tell me, I pray you, did He pass your way?"

It would not be particularly difficult to find fault with Mr. Housman's play. He has not at all times succeeded in blending harmoniously the archaic intention with the ultra-modern tone. The diction in more than one place comes as a *tour de force*. The initial conception is not sustained throughout. But more than all else there are those who wish that the uni-

1. 'Academy,' as above.
2. Ibid.
3. The 'Critic,' as above.

versality of the theme had not been restricted to doctrinal and sectarian appeal. Though the author consciously and purposely made it so, would it not have been better if he had allowed its appeal to address itself to the hearts and consciences of men irrespective of creed or dogma? A large part of the Christian world does not reverently indorse Gabriel's making the sign of the cross before he announces the Birth, or Joseph's genuflections before the cradle. Of course Mr. Housman was quite within his personal right in limiting his appeal, but Bethlehem and Christ are the heritage of all Christians.

The play has been attacked for its imitativeness,[1] but we think not justly so. It follows the scripture narrative, but that is what it should do; it may owe some of its lavish picturesqueness to Oberammergau, but the debt is not to the discredit of the play; it no doubt derives its doctrinal spirit from the example of 'Everyman,' but neither is this a detraction. On the other hand, the conception of the knocking at the gate of Bethlehem is decidedly original, the introduction of the Blind Shepherd is not found elsewhere, and a large part of the adoration scene, especially in detail,

1. 'Dramatic Criticism,' Volume IV., page 205, J. T. Grein.

MUTILATION NOTED p 103-112

is equally the author's own, while the entire conception and the manner of its presentation contains all the originality one could wish.

We have written of this play without reference to its presentation on the stage. Unfortunately, it has not been our privilege to witness it. We have therefore no opinion as to whether the author made a mistake "when he surrendered his work to the exuberant imagination of a scenic experimentalist.[1] Our feeling is, however, that the subject is too sacred, and Mr. Housman's intention too genuinely sincere, to admit anything that would tend to lessen the primary appeal. Whether Mr. Gordon Craig's new methods of lighting and the resultant stage effects do so, we shall leave to those who are in a position to form a conclusion. But from an appeal within the play itself, or from the novelty of stage mechanism, or both, the play has succeeded when given. It has been produced in England, Scotland, Ireland, America, India, and very recently twice more in England, in spite of the censorship, which keeps it from being popularly known.

1. Grein, as above.

'The Broken Bars'—Miss Anna Wynne—New York—November, 1906.

'Eager Heart'—Miss A. M. Buckton—London—December, 1906.

'The Temptation of Agnes'—William Poel—London—March, 1907.

'A Miracle'—Granville Barker—London—March, 1907.

'The Christian Pilgrim'—James MacArthur—New York—November, 1907.

'The Struggle Everlasting'—Edwin Milton Royle—New York—September, 1907.

'A Mystery Play'—R. H. Benson—Cambridge, England—December, 1907.

'The Servant in the House'—Charles Rann Kennedy—New York—March, 1908.

'The Passing of the Third Floor Back'—Jerome K. Jerome—London—September, 1908.

'The Little Town of Bethlehem'—Mrs. Spencer Trask—Brooklyn—January, 1909.

'Time'—Norreys Connell—Dublin, Spring of 1909.

'Passion Play' (San Francisco)—Father Josaphat Kraus—1909.

'The Travelling Man'—Lady Augusta Gregory—Dublin, March, 1910.

'The Piper'—Josephine Preston Peabody—Stratford-on-Avon—July, 1910.

'A Nativity'—Dr. Douglas Hyde—Dublin—January, 1911. Previously in Gaelic in Sligo.

'Everywoman' — Walter Browne — Hartford, Connecticut—February, 1911.

'The Soul of the World'—Mrs. Percy Dearmer—London—December, 1911.

'Life's Measure'—Nugent Monck.

'The Lost Saint'—Doctor Douglas Hyde. Ballaghaderreen, County Mayo.

'Bon Secours'—The Honorable Mrs. Anstruther.

'The Painter and the Millionaire'—H. M. Paull.

'Pilgrim's Progress'—Mrs. Hadley and Miss Ouless.

'Parsifal: A Romantic "Mystery" Drama'—T. Hilhouse Taylor.

Appendix B

The following is a list of revivals of medieval English Miracle and Morality plays, together with such information concerning their performance, as I have been able to obtain. No account is taken of performances by local organizations in various Universities and Colleges. The list makes no claim to completeness.

'Everyman:'

First given July 13, 1901, by the Elizabethan Stage Society at the Charter House School, London. This morality has been performed many times and in many places since that date.

'The Sacrifice of Isaac:'

This is from the 'Histories of Lot and Abraham,' the fourth of the Chester Miracle plays. Given with the first revival of 'Everyman' as above.

'The Salutation and the Nativity,' 'The Play of the Shepherds,' and 'The Adoration of the Magi:'

Three of the Chester Miracle plays given by the English Drama Society at Chester, November 29, 1906. So successful were these that a plan was formed whereby the entire Chester

Cycle was to be presented under the auspices of the Chester Archaeological Society during Whitsuntide week of 1907. The society, however, owing to the heavy expense, abandoned the production. These three plays were afterwards given in London, and have been revived eighteen times.

'The Interlude of Youth:'

A Tudor Catholic Morality. Revived January 8, 1906, by the English Drama Society, London. It has been given as many as twenty times since, privately before the Queen, and in London, in Manchester, and in Oxford.

'Herodes sive Adoratio Magorum:'

A Mystery play of the twelfth century. Given in New York first in 1906, repeated in 1909 and again in 1910.

'The Slaying of the Innocents:'

Given with the Chester Nativity plays by the English Drama Society at University College, London, just before Christmas, 1907.

'King Johan:'

A Morality by John Bale. Revived at Ipswich, England, February 12, 1907, under the patronage of the Duke of Devonshire, the Mayor of Ipswich, H. Beerbohm Tree, and others, and "divers of the Burgesses and Freemen of this Ancient Borough." Produced

under the direction of John Booth of the 'East Anglian Daily Times,' Ipswich.

Four Chester Miracle plays described as the 'Salutation Play,' 'The Shepherds' Play,' 'The Kings' Play,' and 'The Slaying of the Innocents:'

Given by F. R. Benson and his Shakespearean company at the Guild Hall in Stratford-on-Avon, April 22, 1909.

'The Play of the Shepherds:'

From Chester Cycle. Given as part of the Church or Fulham Pageant, 1909.

'The World and the Child:'

A Morality interpolated into 'The Masque of Anne Boleyn' arranged by Mr. Nugent Monck and Mrs. Bertram Talbot. Given August 11, 12, 13, 1909, at Norfolk. This morality has been given nine times.

'Mankind:'

A Morality. Given by the Dramatic Guild, New York, December, 1910.

'Secunda Pastorum:'

A Miracle play. Given with 'Mankind' as above.

'Paradyse:'

Norwich Mystery play. Given by Mr. Nugent Monck.

'The Annunciation,' 'Secunda Pastorum,' and 'The Flight into Egypt:'

Three Towneley Mystery plays. Given by Mr. Nugent Monck and the English Drama Society.

'Noah's Flood,' a Miracle, and 'Nice Wanton,' a Morality:

New York, March 27, 1911.

'Interlude of Youth,' and 'Secunda Pastorum:'

Given by Nugent Monck's School of Acting, Abbey Theatre, Dublin, November 23, 1911.

'Jacob and Esau:'

Given by the Elizabethan Stage Society, January 3, 1912. Though this is an Interlude, and is free from abstractions, its purpose, however, is plainly religious and didactic.

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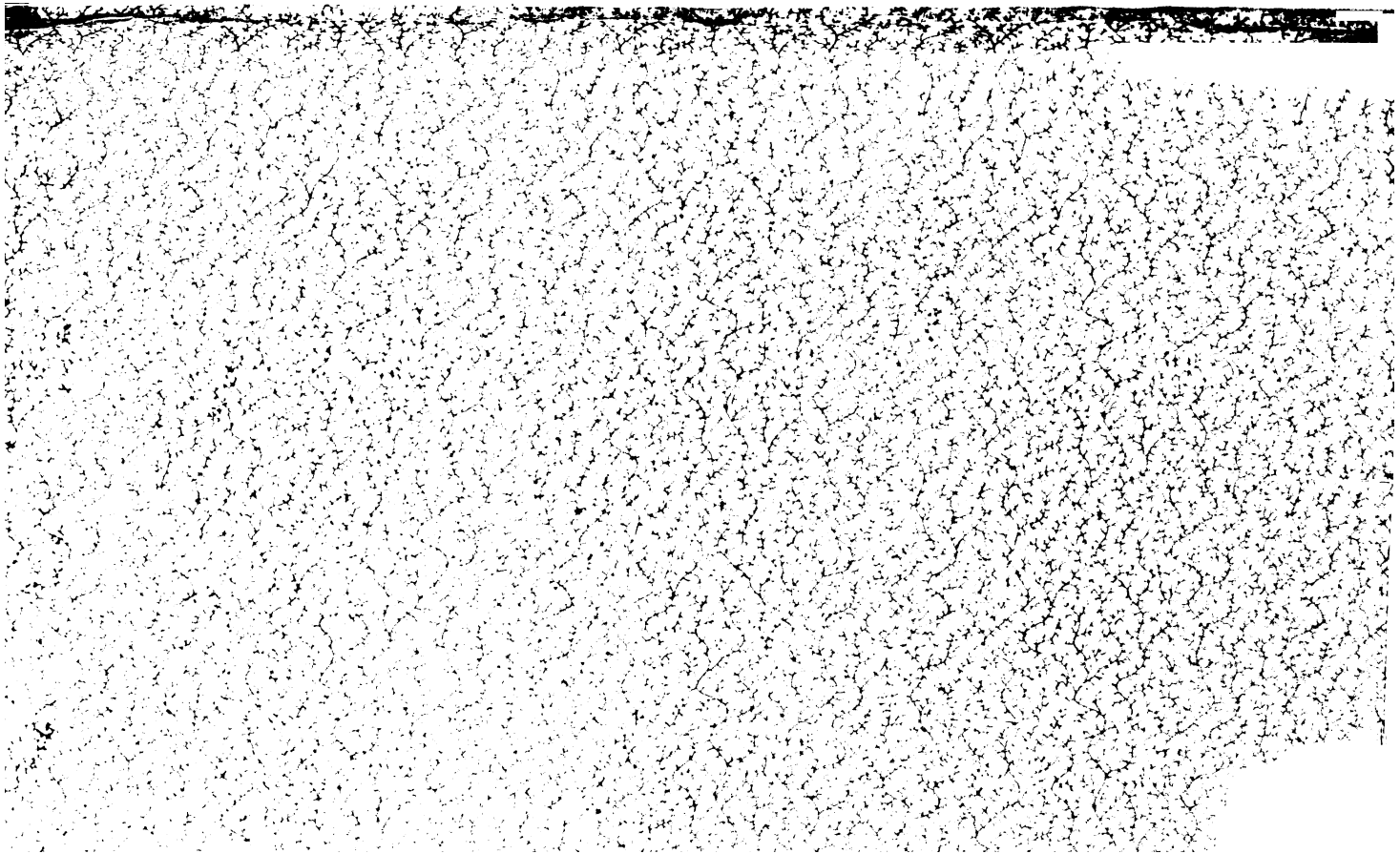

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